

# Producer Led Watershed Protection Grant Program



## Request for Proposals

Proposal form available on the DATCP Web Site:

[http://datcp.wi.gov/Environment/Land\\_and\\_Water\\_Conservation/index.aspx?Id=237](http://datcp.wi.gov/Environment/Land_and_Water_Conservation/index.aspx?Id=237)

**Deadline: Friday, April 1<sup>st</sup> 2016 at 4:30 p.m.**

**Electronic submissions only to:**

[Rachel.Rushmann@wi.gov](mailto:Rachel.Rushmann@wi.gov)

Questions?

Rachel Rushmann, DATCP: 608-224-4622, [Rachel.Rushmann@wi.gov](mailto:Rachel.Rushmann@wi.gov)

Sara Walling, DATCP: 608-224-4501, [Sara.Walling@wi.gov](mailto:Sara.Walling@wi.gov)

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The administration of the Producer-Led Watershed Grant Program is funded by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) to provide support for producer-led, non-point source water pollution abatement activities that improve water quality in Wisconsin. The maximum amount of available funds per legal entity is \$20,000 each fiscal year. **Successful applicants will be required to enter into a grant contract with DATCP each year funding is awarded. No funding commitment is final until the contract is executed.**

## Deadline and Award Notification

Proposals must be received electronically by **Friday, April 1<sup>st</sup> 2016 at 4:30 p.m.** Applicants will be notified of their application status within 45 days of the closing of the application process.

## Who Can Apply?

Applicants will include producer-led groups that meet **all** of the following criteria:

1. The producer led group includes at least 5 agricultural producers each of whom operates an eligible farm<sup>1</sup>, within the same watershed. The group may include additional agricultural producers who are not required to be operators of eligible farms but those producers must also operate a farm within the designated watershed.
2. The group collaborates with at least one of the following:
  - a. DATCP
  - b. The Department of Natural Resources.
  - c. A county land conservation committee.
  - d. The University of Wisconsin-Extension or the Discovery Farms program of the University of Wisconsin-Extension.
  - e. A nonprofit conservation organization<sup>2</sup>.
3. The group must form a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with one of the collaborating entities listed in (2) above.
4. The group assists agricultural producers in the watershed to voluntarily conduct nonpoint source water pollution abatement activities.
5. The group contributes matching funds at least equal to but not less than the amount requested.

<sup>1</sup>An "**eligible farm**" means a farm that produced at least \$6,000 in gross farm revenues during the taxable year or a total of at least \$18,000 in gross farm revenues during 3 taxable years.

<sup>2</sup>A "**non-profit conservation organization**" means a nonstock corporation, charitable trust, or other entity whose purposes include the acquisition of property for conservation or agricultural preservation purposes, that is described in section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, that is exempt from federal income tax under section 501 (a) of the Internal Revenue Code, and that is a qualified organization under section 170 (h) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

## Available Funding and Maximum Awards

DATCP will make grant awards from the appropriation of \$250,000 per fiscal year for Producer Led Watershed Protection Grants. The maximum amount of available funds per legal entity is \$20,000 each fiscal year. Grant recipients may be eligible to extend their grant funds into the next fiscal year on a case-by-case basis.

## Eligible projects.

Eligible projects may include, but are not limited to, the following activities:

- Startup, work planning, mission development, goal setting, learning days to have experts discuss related topics, etc.
- Provide incentive payments to producers to implement conservation practices such as soil testing, cover crops, nutrient and manure management planning, no-till, buffer strips, grassed waterways, manure composting, low-disturbance manure injection, etc.
- Measure and promote economic and environmental benefits of conservation practices
- Perform nutrient management planning, training and assessments
- Develop innovative approaches to manure storage, stacking, or conservation equipment-sharing that increases and/or identifies economic and environmental benefits of such practices
- Increase voluntary producer and agribusiness participation in a watershed through education and outreach activities such as hosting conferences, workshops or field days
- Collaborate with partner(s) for on-farm research that identifies economic and environmental benefits/opportunities of utilizing various conservation practices
- Complete cost-effective edge-of-field and in-stream water quality monitoring
- Perform farm walkovers to evaluate farm, manure, and nutrient management practices and identify solutions to resource concerns

Please note: Innovative ideas are welcomed. If you would like to submit a project including activities other than those listed above, we recommend contacting the program manager, Rachel Rushmann, at [rachel.rushmann@wisconsin.gov](mailto:rachel.rushmann@wisconsin.gov) or by phone at 608-224-4622.

### **Collaborating Entity.**

All applicants must have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with one of the required entities listed in the 'Who Can Apply?' section at the time of application or prior to grant contract development. Resources are available for developing a MOU on our webpage.

**Eligible Costs.** If awarded funding, applicants may request reimbursement to cover any of the following eligible costs:

- Development of work plan, mission development, goal setting, learning days to have experts discuss related topics, development of incentive program, etc.
- Incentive payments for conservation practices such as soil testing, cover crop seed, etc.
- Field days, workshops, conferences (facility rentals, meals, and expenses directly related to hosting the event)
- Personnel (labor) for coordinator role including expenses for salaries and wages, contract and consulting services, and mileage at allowable state rates. The maximum amount for any type of labor expense is \$25/hour
- Mailings, creation of marketing and outreach brochures, handouts, newsletters, factsheets, etc.
- Materials and supplies directly associated with the project
- Incentive payments for equipment rentals of innovative technologies used/shared by all farmers within the producer-led group, for example covering costs for renting a low-disturbance manure injector, no-till

drill, etc.

- Cost-effective edge-of-field and water quality monitoring
- Farm walkovers to identify and evaluate potential or existing resource concerns, nutrient management implementation and other water quality practices

\*Staff time must be directly related to the work of the producer-led group. Any staff time requested must be set at a cap of \$25/hour and may be no more than 25% of the total requested funds. For example, if your funding request is \$20,000, you may request up to \$5,000 in funding to be used for a coordinator role. Staff time other than for a coordinator role is not eligible for reimbursement costs however, it may be used as part of your matching contribution.

**Grant funds may not reimburse any of the following expenses:**

- Real estate purchases
- Repayment of loans or mortgages
- Rent or contract payments for time periods extending beyond the term of the grant contract
- Equipment purchases
- Administrative or overhead costs that are not direct costs of the grant project
- Lobbying activities

**Matching Funds.** Letters of Commitment must be provided by match contributors, outlining their intended support and donations. **Matching funds must be directly related to the work of your producer led group and within the watershed that the work is being completed.**

Match must be at least equal to but no less than the total requested funds (1:1 ratio). For example, if you are requesting \$20,000, you must provide a match of at least \$20,000 which can come in the form of any combination of the following acceptable matching contributions:

- Funds from other grantors and/or sponsorship, including DATCP Nutrient Management Farmer Education funding
- Farmer and/or staff time at a rate of \$25/hour
  - Outreach, research, legal, administrative, technical and education services
- Facility rentals, mailing, printing, production costs
- Purchase of conservation equipment
- Cost-share on practice implementation (for example, a farmer's portion spent on cover crops can be used towards the match)

**Note: Match can be 100% in-kind. However, the maximum amount of your producer led group's time and your chosen collaborator's time cannot exceed 50% of the match. If you have any questions regarding eligible match, please contact the program manager at 608-224-4622.**

## **Reporting Requirements**

Grant recipients will be required to file an **annual report** with DATCP as well as have at least one representative from the group attend an annual **information-sharing workshop**. Details of what must be included in the final report will be outlined in a grant contract between the producer-led group and DATCP. Funded projects must submit an annual project report within 45 days after the funding period has ended.

Note: A detailed invoice of expenses including any receipts for expenses, purchases made or services provided will be required. Detailed documentation about match and in-kind expenses will also be required.

Example reporting metrics for a startup group	Example reporting metrics for an established group
Number of hours spent planning	Number of acres of conservation practices
Work plan with goals	Number of soil samples taken
Plan created for conservation incentives	Water quality monitoring completed
Mission statement	Increase in number of participants and partnerships
Water quality monitoring plan	Number of farm walkovers
Data collection and analysis plan	Coordinator position: hours spent
How often your group met and what you accomplished at meetings	Attendance and success at outreach events
Number of new farms involved in the group	Number of speaking engagements
Number of new partnerships you formed	Number of nutrient management plans developed or updated
Number of speaking engagements	Number of outreach materials created
Number of mailings sent out to farmers in the watershed	Phosphorus Index value reductions
Number of outreach materials created	Soil test P reductions

## Submission Guidelines

Proposals, with all supporting application materials, must be received electronically **by 4:30 p.m. on Friday, April 1<sup>st</sup> 2016 to [Rachel.Rushmann@wisconsin.gov](mailto:Rachel.Rushmann@wisconsin.gov)**. Applicants will be notified of their application status within 45 days of the closing of the application process. **We strongly suggest you reach out to the program manager to discuss your concept or project prior to submission of your application.**

For more information, please visit our webpage:

[http://datcp.wi.gov/Environment/Land\\_and\\_Water\\_Conservation/index.aspx?Id=237](http://datcp.wi.gov/Environment/Land_and_Water_Conservation/index.aspx?Id=237)

## Applicant's Checklist

A complete application includes:

- ☐ A complete application with budget that identifies match of no less than the requested grant award
- ☐ A signed MOU, or correspondence between the group and chosen collaborating entity that includes the expected date of MOU completion
- ☐ Letter (s) of commitment or correspondence provided by match contributors
- ☐ Letter(s) of support from project partners (optional)

## Application Processing and Evaluation

DATCP staff and advisors to the Producer-led Watershed Grant Program will review and score submitted proposals on a competitive basis with amounts no greater than \$20,000 per individual group. Additionally, the awards will be determined by and based on the quantity and content of the applications received as well as the extent to which the application meets the following criteria:

- **Completeness of Application**– Application includes all required documentation and complies with DATCP’s Request for Proposals and ATCP 52 including eligibility and legal entity status.
- **Project scope** –The application meets program goals and priorities to increase non-point source pollution abatement activities and farmer participation to improve water quality.
- **MOU** – An MOU has been formed with at least one of the required collaborating entities or correspondence between the group and chosen collaborating entity that includes the expected date of MOU completion has been addressed.
- **Budget** – Costs are allowable, realistic, and budgeted in accordance with DATCP’s Request for Proposals. The grant proposal and budget adequately identifies the nature of project expenses to be reimbursed under the proposed grant.
- **Matching funds** – Budget reflects match at least equal to but no less than the total requested funds.
- **Measuring progress** – Project includes a plan for measuring progress during the proposed project period to track project success.
- **Project evaluation metrics** – Adequate metrics are provided to evaluate project progress and success.
- **Innovation** – Project shows creative and innovative approaches to water quality issues.
- **Letters of support** – Letters of support are included from project partners identifying their roles and commitment of support for the project.
- **Letters of commitment or correspondence are provided by match contributors**
- **Nonpoint source pollution abatement** – The degree to which your project is expected to achieve improved water quality

### **Funding Distribution**

Awards will be distributed through a stipend and reimbursement process. DATCP will distribute 25% of the requested funds to the grant recipient upon the signing of the grant contract with DATCP. The remaining funds will be distributed through a reimbursement process upon receipt of the reimbursement request(s) and required receipts or other supporting documentation.

For example: If your group applies for \$20,000, you will receive \$5,000 up front after a legal entity signs a grant contract with DATCP. A group will then apply for reimbursement of eligible costs after the remaining funds have been spent, a maximum of 2 reimbursement requests each funding cycle.

**DATCP will notify grant recipients of the funding decisions within 45 days of the closing of the application process. Resources including example budgets, projects, model MOUs, etc. are available on the DATCP Producer Led Watershed Protection Grant webpage:**

**[http://datcp.wi.gov/Environment/Land\\_and\\_Water\\_Conservation/index.aspx?Id=237](http://datcp.wi.gov/Environment/Land_and_Water_Conservation/index.aspx?Id=237)**